

40.1a Family Stuff, Trip to Europe 1980:

As our children grew, we talked about providing them with an understanding of the world. At first the thought was to go to Europe and Russia. Russia was a thought as that is where my father's oldest half-brother, Peter Verigin, had moved to in the mid-1920s. We tried making contact so that we could get an invite to go behind the "Iron Curtain", but our contacts were not able to return our letters.

We finally settled on a five (5) week tour of Europe and part of Asia. We had budgeted about \$18,000 but by the time 1979 came around we were well under \$10,000 saved but we thought the trip was very fundamental to our entire family and so we decided to borrow the balance and make the trip.

1. E. Verigin Family at start of trip July 1980 boarding Air Canada from Calgary, Alberta Canada to Frankfurt, Germany



Left to Right:

Lori, Tamara, Nona, Father (Elmer) and Mother (Marilyn)

Kim standing in front of Tamara

Notice that Mom is clutching her bag!

This was the first flight for most of the family and a very exciting time. On the plane, the girls quickly made friends with a young German lad who had been apprenticing in Calgary as a Newscaster. I met a German Realtor that travelled the world purchasing farmland for German Nationals that wanted a place to retreat to before the next world war which they expected any time. The drinks were part of the ticket and so we noticed each other when later we were the only ones drinking Scotch at midnight.

He was totally familiar with agriculture and was able to tell me what crops grew best in Canada and was very knowledgeable regarding the Canadian prairies. He invited us to come to Nuremberg when we returned from our Mediterranean Cruise.

2. Landed in Frankfurt Germany

We took a tram into downtown Frankfurt as we needed to board a train at the 'Bahnhof'. The young lad was attracted to the girls and was more than happy to show us how to board the tram and get to the Bahnhof (train station). We were hungry and not sure if we were ready for German cuisine yet but, lo and behold, a McDonald's was right across from the Bahnhof and away we went.



We had a family lunch at McDonald's in Cranbrook on the way to the Calgary Airport and paid \$18.00.

We arrive in Frankfurt and were surprised to see a McDonalds across from the Bahnhof (Train Station).

We were hungry and decided on another "cheap lunch" but this time we paid \$44.00. Ouch!

Tasted the same!



Mom read the itinerary and thought the train left Frankfurt for Ancona at 1200 noon but actually it was 1200 midnight.

So, we lazed around, and a young German Newscaster offered to show us around.

Kim was having a "rest".

The young lad stayed with us for the day as we waited for our train to Ancona. He was able to give us a tour of the area surrounding the Bahnhof and then he had to leave.

3. Took a train to Ancona, Italy

Somehow, we again misinterpreted our schedule as we thought the train trip to Ancona would be from 1200 midnight to 4:00 A.M. but realized too late that we were to arrive at 4:00 in the afternoon. We had only one compartment and sleeping was initially a challenge as there were

ledges that came down and next to nothing for bedding. Then we passed out being so tired. We lost Nona and found her sitting on a chair watching the scenery go by.

The next challenge was getting something to eat the next morning as firstly we did not have the correct currency and secondly there was no food coach. We eventually were able to get packaged lunches. We were parked temporarily by another train with a few young boys on it. Next thing we knew our daughters were sharing those lunches with the boys. I guess they were just being hospitable but too late there was no other source of food.

Yes, we had to pass through Austria, Switzerland and then enter Italy. There were the customs guards in each country, and it was quite an experience and a bit stressful communicating. Almost like in the movies.

Later in the day, the hunger pangs came through, but we did not have any Lira and so buying anything was out of the question and we needed to wait till we got to Ancona.

4. Hotel in Ancona

We took a cab and that was interesting as the Cabbie could not speak English, so we just showed him the name of the hotel that the Tour Company had reserved for us.

It was a great hotel situate on a hill overlooking the Adriatic Sea. The rooms were great but the one person that could speak English went off shift just as after we got registered.

So, we searched and found the Dining Room. The menu was in Italian and no matter how we tried, we could not explain that we wanted Spaghetti and Meat Balls and maybe chicken like at the Colander back home. We just could not get our message across. There were appetizers spread just outside the Dining Room as in most upscale hotels but just about everything was pickled something or another and not what we wanted.

In the end we got something to eat but it was a grueling test for a young family.

The next morning, we needed to wait to board our ship and so we decided to tour Ancona by bus. We did not know how to pay and so stayed on the bus for over an hour until a bus inspector noticed us and we paid up. It was a nice tour anyway!

Beautiful city!

5. Boarded the Atlante Ocean Cruiser in Ancona

No one from the Verigin family had ever been on an Ocean Cruiser so this first experience was very exciting and traumatic as there were over 2,500 passengers preparing to board at the same time. Somehow a few young stewards noticed us, especially the girls, and suddenly we were

surrounded by eager young men, anxious to carry our luggage. They also were able to navigate in and around people to get us directly to our state rooms.



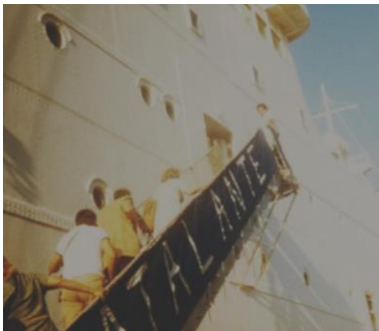
The Ancona docks on the Adriatic Sea.



The next day, we were at the docks ready for a 7-day cruise of the Mediterranean. The ship was definitely a sight to see.

Were we excited?

Well, what would you expect?



We could not wait to board!

We were lucky for good-looking daughters as somehow the young male staff spotted us and were quick to assist us to our rooms.

Did not have to carry any baggage nor ask directions.



Were we excited or what?

They even had a bottle of Champagne in each stateroom.

Underage girls drinking.....!

Do you think Kim was hiding his glass?

Yes, Mom is hanging on to her bag for dear life.



Did you see those good-looking stewards?
This is going to be fun!
Yes, we had the European adapter for the plug.

Well, the first positive thing that we noticed was the never-ending supply of food of all kinds. It was an experience watching the waiters serving the food from large platters. They would pinch the food with two spoons like tweezers and set it on our plates. The entire performance was captivating. Yes, and mouth-watering.

Drinks were additional along with other perks that we found we wanted. In the end we were presented with bills that we forgot we needed to pay along with a 15% gratuity that we somehow did not expect. That was painful!

6. The Mediterranean Cruise from Ancona and returning to Ancona

The various places where the ship would dock required payment for a tour and so one had to consider all these costs before deciding what we wanted to do. The following side trips were taken by us, and we enjoyed them very much.

Sometimes the ship would not dock, and we would have to take small boats from the ship to shore. Yes, exciting!

a. Athens, Greece



Aerial View of the Parthenon from Google Earth. At the time we were there in 1980, no restoration work was taking place which is now happening in this photo.



Parthenon ruins in Athens Greece. This photo taken by Nona indicates a time before restoration started.

Although the pillars appear to be homogenous, they are actually built-in sections and erected like bricks.



Parthenon Structure, Athens, Greece.

Nona was able to capture the detail of pillar to beam connections.

All the historic structures were very interesting and held us all spellbound to remember for our lifetimes. We were also treated to the changing of the guards at the Government House.



Inside the Coliseum at Athens, Greece.

b. Olympia, Greece

This was an exciting place as the origin of the Olympics originated here.



Olympia, Greece

Torch Starting Point for the "Olympic Flame" that continues from here to wherever in the world the Olympic Event takes place.



Olympia, Greece

Pools around former hotel for athletes and spectators. This trench wound around the hotel and the water was about 1.2 meters deep.



Entrance to the Olympic Grounds at Olympia, Greece.



Olympic Grounds at Olympia, Greece.
Dash area for the races.



Olympic Grounds, Olympia, Greece
Pillar ruins indicating construction as tiles with center core to align into a pillar.

c. Ephesus, Turkey



Street in old city of Ephesus, Turkey circa 1,000 B.C.

These ruins were originally constructed under the Greek Empire.

The "Library" is in the foreground.



This the "Library" addition as the actual library was across the street. So, the husband left his wife to do the shopping while he went to the library. This building was a fancy "ladies of the night" place across the street that was connected underground to the library.

End Part 1 of Chapter 40.1a (Part 2 is Chapter 40.1b)